



BSM STRATEGIES FOR ENTERPRISES IN EMERGING MARKETS

By Lorena Mendoza, Chief Executive Officer, AIS Sistemas Avanzados de Información

Technologies that automate processes to improve service delivery are providing exciting benefits to enterprises in emerging markets. This is particularly the case with Business Service Management (BSM) solutions. BSM is a unified platform that simplifies and automates processes for many IT disciplines. It enables IT organizations to save time and money, improve decision making, and align more closely with the business.

As compelling as the benefits of BSM are, however, enterprises in emerging markets have hesitated to implement aggressive BSM strategies. Nearly ten years ago, when AIS first started talking to clients about BSM, the reaction was often, “We don’t need BSM; we have plenty of people to manage the IT infrastructure.” At the time, IT executives indicated that it would be more cost effective to hire additional people than to implement BSM solutions.

Today, however, many of these same enterprises recognize that manual efforts are no longer viable to support large enterprises with huge IT infrastructures. IT costs are rising, and users are suffering from poor performance, outages, and slow response to issues and problems.

Now is the time for these enterprises to adopt BSM because of the close alignment between process and technology. For example, IT service management processes have matured over time. The value of best-practice processes, such as those outlined in IT Infrastructure Library® (ITIL®)

guidelines, has been proven time and again in thousands of businesses around the world. BSM solutions are available that embrace these proven processes. Still, some IT executives may be concerned that implementing BSM is too ambitious, too expensive, and too time consuming.

The good news is that enterprises don’t have to implement all aspects of BSM at once. In fact, the best path to BSM is a phased approach in which IT moves in deliberate increments, gaining significant and demonstrable value with each increment.

Take It a Step at a Time

AIS has helped many large enterprises with their successful BSM implementations. Through this experience, we have evolved a step-by-step approach to BSM that minimizes risk and delivers value each step of the way. Our approach gives IT organizations tremendous flexibility in implementing BSM. As a result, you can have an implementation that meets your unique situation, taking into account such factors as funding, human resources, and cultural change.

Our approach begins with the identification of a pain point that has significant business impact. IT sets clear goals defining what they expect to accomplish in addressing this pain point. They then adopt best-practice processes and deploy BSM solutions that automate the processes. Finally, they establish metrics for gauging success and then publicize the results to gain buy-in for expanding the scope of BSM in the organization.

Here's an example that illustrates the approach. Assume that slow response in handling incidents and problems is a major source of pain for a company. IT begins its transition to BSM by addressing this issue. First, IT establishes a top-to-bottom, best-practice process for incident and problem management. That means tracking the complete lifecycle of all incidents, from the opening of incident tickets to resolution. It also means escalating issues to the appropriate teams for resolution when necessary. IT then deploys a BSM service desk solution that implements the process. Using meaningful metrics collected by the solution, IT has what's needed to communicate success and to make it easier to get funding for additional BSM initiatives.

Also in this step, the company might implement a configuration management database (CMDB) and automated discovery tools that populate the CMDB. Not only does this repository provide a foundation for BSM solution integration, it also houses a wealth of data about the IT infrastructure. The data defines the physical and logical relationships of infrastructure components, as well as the business processes and people those components support. This information is very valuable in troubleshooting incidents, keeping affected users informed, and prioritizing actions based on business impact.

Along the way, IT puts metrics in place to assess service quality. Metrics might include first-call resolution rates, mean time to repair (MTTR), downtime/availability, and performance. As a result, if a user calls IT and complains about poor service quality, IT has solid data that either confirms the user's claims or demonstrates that IT is meeting its service level commitments. If the user claims that an important application was out for a week, IT can create the appropriate reports and show that, in fact, the application was down only 15 minutes over the past seven days.


When an enterprise reaches this level of maturity, the conversation between IT and the business changes. Instead of being defensive about the quality of service, IT can talk to the business with confidence and demonstrate what the true levels of service quality are. That sets the stage for conversations around what level of service various users within the enterprise need. BSM enables IT to conduct those conversations using terms that business people understand.

Pay Attention to Integration

Enterprises in emerging markets began to realize the need for automation of targeted IT service management functions early on. In response, many implemented point solutions that yielded improvements in specific areas, but failed to deliver the kind of overall results the IT organizations had expected. What's required is integration that enables solutions to work together.

BSM is an integrated approach. While any given BSM solution addresses a specific IT service management challenge and delivers return on investment in specific IT disciplines, it's the ability of BSM solutions to work together that delivers the real value for the enterprise.

Enterprises that have taken a point-solution approach need to make integration a priority. Fortunately, many



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The next step might be applied to implementing a performance and availability monitoring solution and integrating it with the service desk. The monitoring solution detects potential problems and generates alerts. Integration with the service desk allows the automatic creation of incident tickets, which are routed immediately to the appropriate support teams. This step enables IT to transition from a reactive to a proactive mode in incident and problem management.

of these solutions can be integrated into a comprehensive BSM environment. In other cases, enterprises may have to replace some tools with more tightly integrated BSM solutions.

In any case, it's a matter of taking a step at a time, and finding ways to make the solutions work seamlessly together. Success comes when IT understands the most pressing needs of the business and tackles those needs one at a time.

A Real-World Success Story


One AIS customer in Latin America provides an example of this step-by-step approach. The company faced many of the same challenges that other enterprises in emerging markets experience. Its experience demonstrates how steady progress toward comprehensive BSM yields compelling business benefits every step of the way.

Unlike many emerging-market companies, this company had a substantial IT budget. The company took the approach of buying the latest and greatest point solutions, without a strategy for weaving them together into a holistic platform for managing IT. In many cases, the point solutions didn't align closely with the needs of the business. Furthermore, because the tools were not integrated, they were not delivering the level of efficiency and cost savings that the company had anticipated. So despite all the spending, IT wasn't getting the results it hoped for.

IT was struggling with many challenges. Resolving incidents took too long. For example, bringing a failed server back online typically took one to two days, and that was unacceptable to the user community. What's more, the IT staff had no way to distinguish between low-priority incidents and major issues that were interfering with business-critical operations. Furthermore, there was no process in place for identifying and marking recurring issues, so the IT staff wasted a lot of time solving the same type of incidents again and again.

The answer wasn't to throw away all the current tools and replace them with a single, comprehensive BSM solution. AIS recommended a step-by-step approach that focused on improving processes and getting more value from the solutions already in place. Although implementing some new BSM solutions was part of the strategy, the most important thrust was to bring solutions together in an integrated environment. This required a major cultural shift for the company.

The company started with a performance management solution to monitor its SAP® systems and a help desk solution to streamline the tracking and management of incidents. Over time, IT realized the importance of expanding visibility beyond servers and applications to provide visibility of the IT services supported by the servers and applications. The staff implemented an impact management solution to address this need.



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Performance and impact management capabilities enabled the staff to detect and proactively address issues before they resulted in service degradation. As a result, the number of outages dropped. When outages did occur, IT was able to get systems running again more quickly. Today, if a server fails, the staff can get it back online in less than four hours. Additionally, service modeling capabilities allow the staff to prioritize issues based on business impact.

The next step was to implement a CMDB. The CMDB serves as a central repository for maintaining configuration items (CIs) that comprise the IT infrastructure. It also tracks and manages CI interrelationships, as well as their relationships to the business services they support.

The company has also implemented ITIL best-practice processes and supporting solutions for additional BSM disciplines, including capacity optimization. According to the IT general manager, the IT staff is continuing to build out a road map that supports its BSM strategy and aligns with the needs of the enterprise.

Early on, IT established metrics to assess performance. IT used these metrics to help drive adoption and cultural

change. People began to see that they could resolve incidents more quickly, reduce MTTR, and increase productivity.

Conclusion

Many emerging market enterprises have hesitated to embrace BSM because of their misgivings about its implementation cost and effort. However, the numerous BSM successes across Latin America confirm that their fears are unfounded.

There has never been a better time to adopt a BSM strategy. There are proven best-practice processes that companies can leverage to speed their journey toward BSM. Sophisticated BSM solutions support and automate these processes and provide strong integration facilities that enable IT to create a cohesive, unified environment based on the BSM platform.

These solutions offer flexibility in choosing a path to BSM. Companies can identify the IT areas that are creating the greatest pain and then implement processes and solutions to address those areas one at a time or in combination. The integrated solutions will drive business innovation and deliver a competitive advantage for the enterprise.

For more information about AIS, visit www.ais.com.mx.

For more information about BSM at BMC Software, visit www.bmc.com/bsm.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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ABOUT AIS

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